

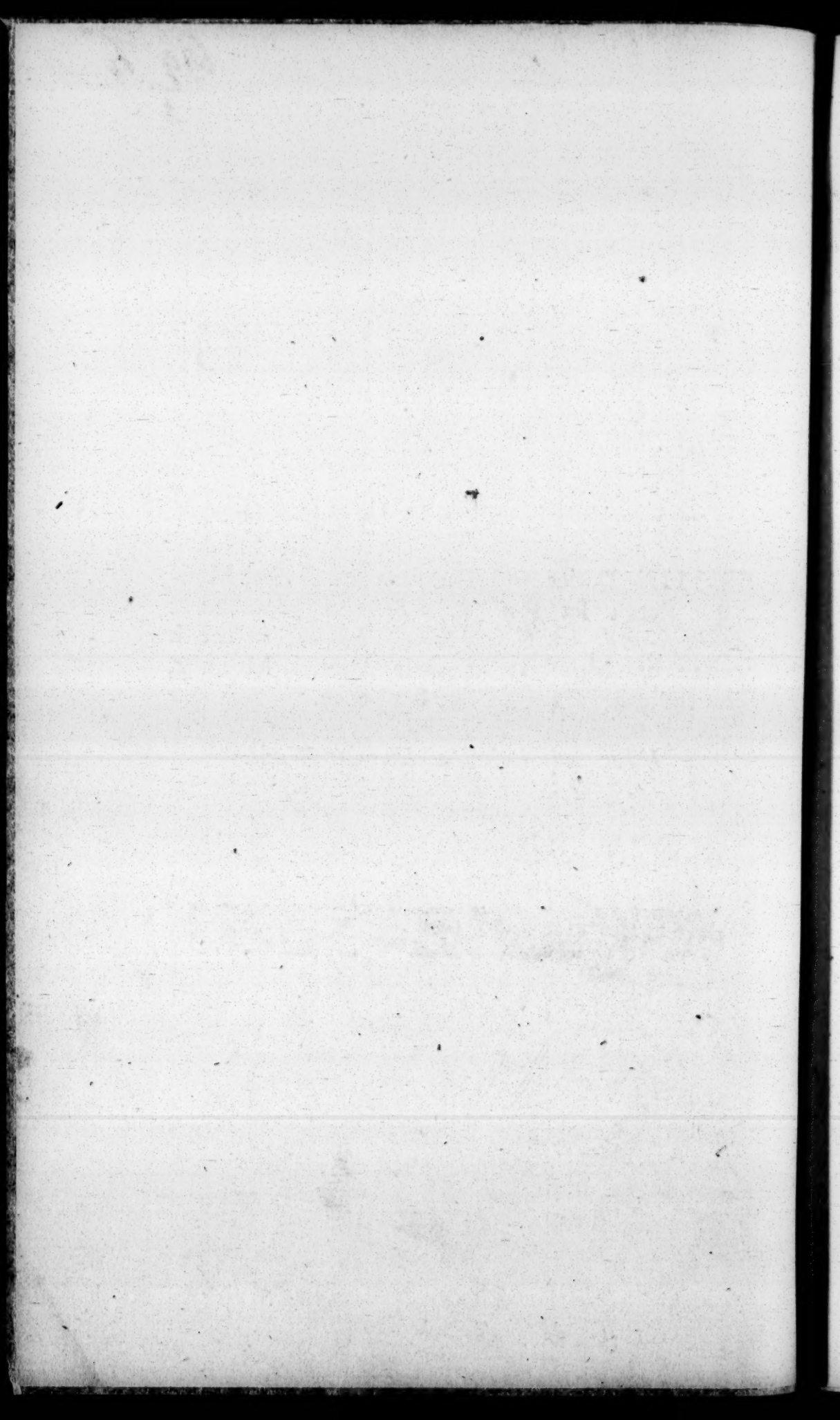


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REMARKS

ON THE

VICAR'S COMPLAINT

Against some of his

PARISHIONERS

For not paying their

T Y T H E S, &c.

REVEREND SIR,



HAVING perused your Bill of Complaint, I here send you my Thoughts about it; and I assure you, Sir, that they are not the Effects of Passion and Ill-will, but of mature Consideration.

I have one small Favour to beg of you at my first setting out, viz. as I shall have frequent Occasion to mention *John Stratford*, I hope you will
C not

not be offended with me if I omit the pompous Titles that you give him, and in my plain rustic Style call him down-right *John Stratford*.

You exprefs in your Complaint, that *John Stratford* gave a Charter of Endowment to the Vicar of *Croydon*, and that it was renewed by *William Courtney*, and confirmed by Pope *Boniface* the IXth; all which may be very true for ought I know to the contrary. But, Sir, if you have no better Claim than these Men gave you, I hope to make it manifest to you and the World, that you have none at all.

Be pleased, Sir, to lay your Hand upon your Heart, and consider seriously what Work the Vicar of *Croydon* was to do for the Wages that *Stratford*, *Courtney*, and *Boniface* the IXth gave him, and then commune with your own Heart, and consider whether if you had lived in their Day, you could have done it. Can you, Sir, think without Horror, of praying to the Dead, and for the Dead; and mumbling over your Prayers in an unknown Tongue to the People? Could you offer the blessed *JESUS* in the Sacrifice of the Mass for the Sins of the Quick and Dead? Could you have offered Oblations for the Dead, for their Release out of Purgatory? Could you have used, in Baptism, Oil, Spittle, Salt, holy Water, and I know not how many Fopperies besides? Could you have preached the detestable Doctrines of the *Romish* Church, which, in your Twenty-second Article, you call *the fond and vain Inventions of Men*, having no Proof in Scripture, but repugnant to the same? And in the Thirty-first Article you call the Sacrifice of the Mass a blasphemous Fable, and dangerous Deceit. All these Things, and abundance more of the like Nature,

you

you must have done, Sir, or else *John Stratford* would not have suffered you to have ranged among your neighbours Pigs and Poultry, but would have done all he could to render you destitute, afflicted, and tormented.

And if, Sir, you could have been so happy as to have escaped his persecuting Hands, and have found yourself inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel of Peace and Truth among the despised *Lollards* (who were very numerous in that Day) then, perhaps, you might have been what I now am, partly a Husbandman, and partly a Preacher, even as *Noah*, the renowned Preacher of Righteousness, was long since.

But, Sir, if on the other hand, you had been weak enough to have believed the *Romish* Doctrine, or wicked enough to have spoke Lies in Hypocrisy, and to have taught Things which you ought not, for filthy Lucre's Sake, (as many Men have done who have gone in the Way of *Cain*, and ran greedily after the Error of *Balaam* for Reward) yet all this would not have secured you from *John Stratford's* Indignation.

Consider, Sir, you have done what the Apostle *Paul* said he had Power to do, you have led about a Sister, a Wife; and when it pleased God, in the Course of his Providence, to remove her hence, you led about another Sister, a Wife: What would *John Stratford* have said to this? It would have availed you nothing to have said that *Peter* was a married Man. *John Stratford* would have told you, that you were of those that creep into Houses, and lead captive silly Women, laden with Sin, and led away with divers Lusts. But you and I, Sir, know better, we

know who hath said, that Marriage is honourable in all, but *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*, Heb. xiii. 4. I make no doubt, Sir, but that you are well read in the History of Church Affairs, and know what a dreadful Storm *Dunstan*, Archbishop of *Canterbury*, brought upon the married Priests here in *England* long before *Stratford* was born or thought of.

Thus, Sir, I think it plain, that if you had been Vicar of *Croydon* in *Stratford's* Day, you could not have held it. Had you been a *Lollard*, you would have been persecuted; had you been a *Papist*, yet being a married Man, you would have been dismissed. But, blessed be God, Sir, you and I are reserved for better Times. Be content, Sir, to let Popish Work, and Popish Wages go together, let them that offer up Oblations for the Dead take the Fees. As you have put your Hand to the Plough of Reformation, dear Sir, look not back, but let your Eyes look right on, and your Eyelids strait before you. *Ponder the Path of your Feet, so shall your Ways be established*, Prov. iv. 25. 26. *For the wise Man's Eyes are in his Head, but the Fool walketh in Darknes*, Eccles. ii. 14.

Had you, Sir, have lived in *Edward* the VIth's Time, you would have been among the Reformers as a speckled Bird, in that you call the Church of *Rome* Apostolic; for you say that *John Stratford* was Legate of the Apostolic See: but the Reformers called it the Chair of Pestilence, the Seat of Anti-Christ, the Mother of Harlots, and I know not how many hard, but true Names.

If the Church of *Rome* be Apostolic, why have ye left her; and if she be departed from the Faith
of

of the Gospel, why call ye her Apostolic? Let me say therefore in Allusion to the Words of the Prophet of old, if JESUS of Nazareth be Master of the Christian Church, follow him; but if Stratford, Courtney, and Boniface, and the rest of that Clan, be Masters, then follow them. Chuse you whom ye will serve, and know this for certain, that you cannot serve them both.

The Apostle *Peter*, in his second Epistle, second Chapter, and Beginning, saith, that there were false Prophets among the People even as there shall be false Teachers among you: Let us take a View of both, and see how exactly they tally with one another. The false Prophets of old are described thus: *His Watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb Dogs, they cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy Dogs, which can never have enough, and they are Shepherds that cannot understand: They all look to their own ways, every one for his Gain from his Quarter, Isai. lvi. 10, 11.* The false Teachers among the Christians are thus mark'd and described; *And through Covetousness shall they with feigned Words make Merchandise of you; having Eyes full of Adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous Practices; 2 Pet. ii. 3, 14. Wo unto them, for they have gone in the Way of Cain, and ran greedily after the Error of Balaam for Reward. These are Murmurers, Complainers, walking after their own Lust, and their Mouth speaketh great swelling Words, having Mens Persons in Admiration because of Advantage. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit, Jude ver. 11, 16, 19. Teaching Things which they ought not for filthy Lucre's Sake, Tit. i. 11. For I know this, that after my Departure shall grievous Wolves enter*

enter in among you, not sparing the Flock. Also of your own selves shall Men arise speaking perverse Things to draw away Disciples after them, Acts xx. 29, 30. Beware of false Prophets, which come to you in Sheeps Clothing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves; ye shall know them by their Fruits, Matth. vii. 15, 16. Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter Times some shall depart from the Faith, giving Heed to seducing Spirits and Doctrines of Devils, speaking Lies in Hypocrisy, having their Consciences seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from Meats, 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3.

Now, Sir, where shall we find the Marks of Apostacy any where so plain as in and upon the *Romish* Clergy? Who but they have forbid all in the Order of the Ministry to marry? And have forbid all Men to abstain from Meats, when they please? Whose Words have been great like unto theirs? Who have had Mens Persons in Admiration as they have had the Pope's, because of Advantage? Who like they have beguiled unstable Souls with the feigned Words and golden Dreams of Purgatory, wherewith they have made Merchandise of the deluded Laity? In a Word, their Doctrines and Practices tally one with another, and tend directly to surfeit the Clergy and starve the Laity. And the Blood of Saints and Martyrs which they have shed, justly entitles them to the Appellations of grievous and ravening Wolves. Their wholesome Severities, their friendly Imprisonments, and above all the merciful Methods of the Inquisition, are the Fruits by which we may know them, let them gird themselves never so tight in their Sheeps Clothing.

And

And here let me remark to you, Sir, that the very Gentlemen that confirmed and ratified the Charter of Endowment to the Vicar of *Croydon*, even *Courtney* and *Boniface* the IXth, were notoriously guilty of Persecution, as may be seen in *Fox's Acts and Monuments*, Vol. I. pag. 658, 659. and in the 657th Page there is the Bull of Pope *Boniface* IX. against the *Lollards*, in which he stirs up King *Richard* II. against them, calling them *damm'd Men*, and *dammable Shadows of Men*. Behold the Men which you claim such Advantages from, they laboured with all their Might to destroy that Faith and Doctrine which you preach. They had abundance of that Wisdom which is from beneath, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish; which consists in bitter Envy and Strife in the Heart. And so they bear the Character that St. *Jude* gives them, where he says, *they separate themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit*. Who have more criminally separated themselves than the *Romish* Clergy? They have separated themselves from the Power of the Civil Magistrate, and also from the lawful Use of Women, and from the Laity in general, upon whom they look down with Scorn, and with feigned Words make Merchandise of them? There is therefore good Reason to beware of them, as a Set of Men that are combined together against the Rights and Interests of all Mankind.

If these Things offend you, I intreat your Patience; for the main Pinch of all (in my Opinion) is yet behind, *viz.* as your Claim is merely Popish, I do humbly apprehend, it is wholly inconsistent with the Tenour of the Thirty-seventh Article of your Church, and contrary to your Subscription when you were made a Minister, and repugnant to the Oath of the King's Supremacy,
which

which you took at your Ordination. Then you solemnly swore, that no foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate hath or ought to have any Jurisdiction, Power, Superiority, Preeminence or Authority ecclesiastical or spiritual within this Realm; and therefore I do utterly renounce and forsake all foreign Jurisdctions, Powers, Superiorities and Authorities.

I pray, Sir, whether your Claim founded on *Stratford's* Grant, and confirmed by Pope *Boniface* the IXth, does not seem at least to jar with this Oath and solemn Renunciation? But this, I think, will still appear in a clearer Light if we consider the Thirty-seventh Article, the Subscription, and Oath of Supremacy, in Conjunction with the first Canon of the Church, to which I humbly conceive they all relate. I shall transcribe the whole Canon entire, that all Persons may judge (as well as they can) whether my Reasoning is conclusive or not. “ As our Duty to the King’s most Excellent Majesty requireth, We first decree and ordain, that the Archbishop of *Canterbury* (from time to time) all Bishops of this Province, all Deans, Archdeacons, Parsons, Vicars, and all other Ecclesiastical Persons, shall faithfully keep and observe, and (as much as in them lieth) shall cause to be observed and kept of others, all and singular Laws and Statutes, made for restoring to the Crown of this Kingdom, the antient Jurisdiction over the State Ecclesiastical, and abolishing of all Foreign Power repugnant to the same. Furthermore, all Ecclesiastical Persons having Cure of Souls, and all other Preachers, and Readers of Divinity-Lectures, shall, to the uttermost of their Wit, Knowledge, and Learning, purely and sincerely “ (with-

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REMARKS
ON THE
VICAR'S COMPLAINT,
By Way of PETITION,
IN THE
High Court of CHANCERY,
Against some of his
PARISHIONERS
For not paying their
T Y T H E S,
M O R T U A R I E S, &c.

By AMOS HARRISON,

The SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N,

Printed for the AUTHOR, and sold by M. FENNER, at the *Turk's Head* in *Gracechurch Street*; J. NOON, at the *White Hart* in *Cheapside*; J. PEMBERTON, at the *Golden Buck* in *Fleetstreet*; R. AMEY, in the *Court of Requests, Westminster*; T. CROSBY, in *Horsly-Down, Fair-Street*; and by Mrs. NUTT and Mrs. COOK at the *Royal Exchange*. 1742.

(Price Three Pence.)

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“ (without any Colour or Diffimulation) teach,
 “ manifest, open, and declare four Times every
 “ Year (at the least) in their Sermons and other
 “ Collations and Lectures, that all usurped and
 “ foreign Power (forasmuch as the same hath
 “ no Establishment nor Ground by the Law of
 “ God) is, for most just Causes, taken away
 “ and abolished; and that therefore no manner
 “ of Obedience or Subjection within his Majesty’s
 “ Realms and Dominions, is due unto any such
 “ foreign Power: But that the King’s Power with-
 “ in his Realms of *England, Scotland and Ireland,*
 “ and all other his Dominions and Countries, is
 “ the highest Power under God, to whom all
 “ Men, as well Inhabitants, as born within the
 “ same, do, by God’s Laws, owe most Loyalty
 “ and Obedience, afore and above all other Powers
 “ and Potentates on Earth.”

Hence I observe, that the Crown of these Realms had once lost its antient Jurisdiction over the State Ecclesiastical.

Secondly, I observe, that when this Canon was made, there were certain Laws then in being for the restoring to the Crown that Power which had been unjustly taken away by Usurpers. In other Words, the Possessors of the Crown had done, as all injured People have a right to do, even to take their own Goods where they find them, even tho’ they should hang under the Pope’s Girdle.

Thirdly, I observe, that all Persons in the holy Function of the Ministry are here bound not only to keep those Laws themselves, but, to the ut-
 D most

most of their Power to persuade others to keep them.

Fourthly, I observe, to this End, they were all of them to a Man, at least four times in a Year, to tell the People, with all the Wit, Knowledge, and Learning that they were Masters of, that all Popish Power was taken away.

Fifthly, I observe, that the Reasons rendered in the Canon for the abolishing of Popish Power are very weighty and conclusive. One Reason is included in the Term *USURPED*; for certainly long Possession gives a Thief no Right. The other Reason is still more conclusive, if possible; and that is, that this Power which the Pope had deprived the Crown of, had no Establishment nor Ground in the Word of God. Now the pleasing Inference from hence is this, that the Whole contains all the Parts of the Whole; therefore if all the Power which the Pope once exercised in the Church within this Realm, was stole from the Crown of this Realm, and had no Establishment nor Ground by the Word of God, then what *John Stratford, Courtney* and *Boniface IX.* did by that usurped and antisciptural Power, is null and void, and cannot be a good Plea in the High Court of *Chancery*. And therefore the Gentry of the Parish of *Croydon* (for any thing which I see to the contrary) may be secure in the Enjoyment of their Pidgeons, notwithstanding any thing that *Boniface* said to the contrary.

Permit me, good Sir, to speak my Mind freely: I think that the Canons, the Articles, the Oath of Supremacy, in a Word, that the whole Train of Church-Artillery is on our Side.

But,

But, Sir, if all the Church-Artillery should prove too weak, and the Popish Charter should be crowned with the Laurels of Victory, consider, Sir, the dreadful Consequences that may follow. If one Popish Charter be decreed in Chancery to be good and valid, notwithstanding the Canon saith it was usurped from the Crown, and therefore for just Cause is taken away from the Usurper, and now the King enjoys his own again; then why may not all the Popish Grants and Charters be brought into the same Court, and meet with the same Encouragement? What will the Nobility, Gentry, and Commonalty that are in the Possession of Church-Lands think of these Things? And may not the Bishop of *Rome* put in his humble Petition upon the same Footing, and pour out his Complaint, “ That notwithstanding
 “ ing there was a Charter made by *John*, King
 “ of *England*, in which he gave up his Realms
 “ of *England* and *Ireland* unto his Predecessor
 “ *Innocent* III. of blessed Memory, for good and
 “ weighty Reasons; such as the Remission of
 “ Sins, and for the Help and Health of our
 “ Kings Souls, and of all Christian Mens Souls;
 “ And after such resigning of the Crown of
 “ *England* into the Hands of *Pandulf*, chief Le-
 “ gate to *Innocent* III. who kept it five Days,
 “ and then made a mutual Contract with the
 “ said *John*, to admit him Tenant to the See of
 “ *Rome*, and his Heirs after him for evermore;
 “ to have and to hold the Realms of *England* and
 “ *Ireland* Time without end, paying the yearly
 “ Rent of One Thousand Marks: — But so it is,
 “ that for many Ages past, the See of *Rome*
 “ hath been defrauded by their *English* Tenants,
 “ who sometimes say one Thing and sometimes
 D 2 “ another,

“ another ; Therefore your Complainant humbly
 “ seeks such Relief as to your Lordship’s great Wis-
 “ dom shall seem meet and convenient ; and your
 “ Petitioner shall ever pray.”

If the Bishop of *Rome* should have so little Penetration as to throw in such a Petition, is it possible to conceive with what just Indignation his most Gracious Majesty would answer ? And, yet, Sir, there is one thing in King *John*’s Charter to the Pope, which seems to make it preferable to *John Stratford*’s to the Vicar of *Croydon*, viz. there was mutual Consent ; for King *John* very fairly down’d on his Knees, submitted to *Pandulf* the Pope’s Legate’s taking the Crown from his Head, and said in this wise, “ Here I resign up the Crown of the
 “ Realm of *England* into the Pope’s Hands, *Inno-*
 “ cent III. and put me wholly in his Mercy.” But, Sir, when *John Stratford* made free with his Neighbour’s Pigs and Poultry, it does not appear from any thing in your Complaint, that the People said *Amen* to it.

But, Sir, as Popish Claims, Charters, and Grants, and Leafes, are Things of no small Importance, especially that of King *John*’s ; suppose that the Right Honourable the Lord Chancellor should apprise his most Gracious Majesty of the Nature and Tendency of your Claim, may we not hope for an Answer of Peace ? May not his most Gracious Majesty say to the Lord Chancellor (in allusion to the Words of King *David* to *Abiathar*) *He that seeketh their Goods, seeketh my Goods ; but with me they shall be in Safety.* Which God of his infinite Mercy grant.

Thus, Sir, I have attacked your Popish Charter and Claim : what other Forces you may have laid in
 Ambush

Ambush I know not ; I have fought the Enemy in Sight, I have briskly encountred with your forlorn Hope, and have given them no Quarter ; but if you have any other Claim, that is, either Christian or Protestant, I promise you, Sir, to give them better Usage. One thing I forgot in its proper Place, and shall therefore mention it here ; which is, if you have any Desire to see King *John's* everlasting Charter, you may find it in *Fox's Acts and Monuments*, Vol. I. page 329.

And now, Sir, I have a few Favours to beg of you, and I have done ; for I desire to be short, and I wish you may think it sweet ; for I can assure you, Sir, that I have no Delight in displeasing any Man, but have an earnest Desire to please all Men as far as I can to their Edification and no otherwise. Let me intreat you therefore in the first place, if what I have said or done be offensive to you, I beg that you will do nothing to me, but what you would willingly have had done to yourself, by *John Stratford*, in case you had lived in his Day, and fallen under his sore displeasure. For this is the Law and Prophets, and the strict Injunction of the LORD JESUS himself, *Mat. vii. 12.*

Secondly, I intreat you not to think me an Adversary to the Church of *England*. To prevent all Misrepresentations of me in this Affair, I here sincerely declare (in the Face of the World) my Thoughts about it. I have an hearty Esteem for the Church of *England*, as it is a noble Part of the Reformation, but not the whole of it. I esteem the Church of *England*, as built upon the Protestant Principle, that holy Scripture contains all Things necessary to Salvation. I esteem it as founded upon that noble Claim of every Man to judge for him-

himself, without which, she can have no Right so much as to be. I have a tender Regard and a hearty Love for all that love the LORD JESUS CHRIST in Sincerity and Truth, howsoever they may differ from me in external Things. I hope I shall always behave as a Man, and as a Christian in all Lowliness and Meekness, forbearing all my Christian Brethren in Love, endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; but all those whose Mouths are full of Cursing and Bitterness, who have no Fear of GOD before their Eyes, nor no Sense of GOD or Religion upon their Minds, I look upon them (properly speaking) to be of no Church, nor of no Religion: I therefore think never the worse of the noble Pillars within the Church, for the Sake of the rotten Props without; but to all that have tasted that the LORD is gracious, whether Non or Con, I wish all Increase of Grace and heavenly Wisdom, and that they may make large Advances farther from *Rome*, and nearer to CHRIST, and come to the *Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ*, Ephes. iv. 13.

And lastly, As to the Maintenance of those that are engaged in the Work of the Ministry, I do verily believe that those that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. That it is the Ordinance of the LORD JESUS that it should be so, as appears from his Charter of Endowment to his ministering Disciples. *Luke x. 7, 8. And in the same House remain eating and drinking such Things as they give—and into whatsoever City ye enter and they receive you, eat such Things as are set before you.* And the Apostle Paul exhorts the Christian People in his Day, to *know them that laboured among them, and were over them in the LORD, and admonished them; and to esteem them very highly in Love for their Work's sake,*
1 Thes.

1 Thes. v. 12. 13. And again, *Let him that is taught in the Word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things,* Gal. vi. 6. From all which it is plain, that the Ministers of the Gospel are to live on the free, liberal and generous Contributions of them that receive them ; and those that receive them not, they have Commandment from JESUS CHRIST to leave them. And our LORD JESUS denounceth this heavy Judgment upon them that receive not his Ministers: *That it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for them.* If indeed a People be poor and indigent, a godly Minister will be content (in that Case) to suffer in part with them.

And here I take this Opportunity to declare to the World, that I am so far from envying you that live by Tythes, that I do really pity you, and are grieved for you, when I consider the Cares, and Fears, and Jealousies, and Fatigues that you are constantly exposed to ; and above all, when I reflect how little Regard many People have to the Ministry of the Word, as preached by such Men with whom they happen to have any Difference about Tythes. I must confess that this is a tender Point that I am now speaking of ; but thus much I hope I may say without Danger or Censure ; That the Legislature may ordain some other Way to maintain the national Ministry without Tythes. And I heartily wish (for their Ease as well as the Peoples) that it might be so. And to prevent all Complaints, I wish that every Minister might have rather more than less than they now enjoy. And that they might have it without any Trouble or Difference with their Parishioners, that so they might give themselves wholly to the Ministry of the Word and Prayer : And then in all Likelihood their Ministry would be more effectual to answer all the Ends and Purposes
for

for which it is designed ; such as turning of Sinners from Darknes to Light, and from the Power of Satan to God, and comforting and strengthening all that believe.

As for Oblations and Oblation-Fees, I must needs say that I think they ought not to be named amongst Protestants as becometh Saints. How odd is the Argument, “ Popish Ministers offer Oblations for the Dead ; therefore Protestant Divines are intitled to the Fees, altho’ they detest the Doctrine, and preach with Zeal against it ? ”

Pardon, Sir, my Boldness with you : I assure you, Sir, I bear no Ill-will to you, nor to no Man living ; I breathe nothing but Good-will to all Mankind ; my Principles lead me so to do. I bid you heartily farewell, and wish you all Happiness both here and hereafter ;

And am your's to serve you in

any thing that I can or may,



AMOS HARRISON.

F I N I S.

